

Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend Claims 1, 9 and 17 as indicated in the following listing of claims, which replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A tool for opening a cable having a length of filament disposed within a sheath, the tool comprising:
 - a proximal portion having a first flange connected with a shaft extending from the flange and adapted for engagement with a powered mechanical rotation device; and
 - a distal portion having a second flange; and
 - a column coupled with one of the proximal and distal portions ~~and detachably engaged~~, the column mechanically and detachably engaged with the other of the proximal and distal portions, ~~the column and~~ including a cavity adapted to grip the filament and disposed such that the cavity is between the first and second flanges when the column is engaged with the other of the proximal and distal portions.
2. (Original) The tool recited in claim 1 wherein the column is fixedly coupled with the one of the proximal and distal portions.
3. (Original) The tool recited in claim 1 wherein:
 - the column comprises a hollow interior; and
 - the cavity comprises a hole extending through a surface of the column to the hollow interior.
4. (Original) The tool recited in claim 1 wherein cavity comprises a plurality of cavities, each such cavity being adapted to grip the filament.

5. (Original) The tool recited in claim 1 wherein the powered mechanical rotation device is a hand-held drill.

6. (Original) The tool recited in claim 1 wherein:
the first flange comprises a threaded hole; and
the column is threaded at a proximal end for threading into the threaded hole,
whereby the column is detachably engaged with the proximal portion and coupled with the distal portion.

7. (Original) The tool recited in claim 1 wherein:
the second flange comprises a threaded hole; and
the column is threaded at a distal end for threading into the threaded hole,
whereby the column is detachably engaged with the distal portion and coupled with the proximal portion.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) A method for opening a cable having a length of filament disposed within a sheath, the method comprising:

attaching an end of the filament to a tool having a column disposed between two flanges, the column **mechanically and detachably engaged with one of the flanges and** including a cavity adapted to grip the filament;

thereafter, rotating the column to pull the filament from the sheath and to spool the filament about the column; and

thereafter, separating one of the flanges from the column to release the spooled filament.

10. (Original) The method recited in claim 9 wherein rotating the column comprises rotating the column with a powered mechanical rotation device engaged with the tool.

11. (Original) The method recited in claim 10 wherein the powered mechanical rotation device is a hand-held drill.

12. (Original) The method recited in claim 9 wherein:
the tool further has a shaft extending from a first of the flanges; and
rotating the column comprises rotating the shaft with a powered mechanical rotating device engaged with the shaft.

13. (Original) The method recited in claim 12 wherein separating one of the flanges from the column comprises separating the first of the flanges from the column.

14. (Original) The method recited in claim 12 wherein separating one of the flanges from the column comprises separating a second of the flanges from the column.

15. (Original) The method recited in claim 9 wherein:
the one of the flanges comprises a threaded hole into which a threaded end of the column is screwed; and
separating the one of the flanges from the column comprises unscrewing the column relative to the one of the flanges.

16. (Original) The method recited in claim 9 wherein the filament comprises a strength member of an optical-fiber cable.

17. (Currently Amended) A system for opening a cable having a length of filament disposed within a sheath, the system comprising:

means for gripping an end of the filament;

means for extracting the filament from within the sheath and for spooling the extracted filament;

means for confining the filament to a longitudinal region as the filament is spooled; and

means for ~~removing~~ **mechanically disengaging** the means for confining to release the spooled filament from the longitudinal region.

18. (Original) The system recited in claim 17 wherein the means for gripping the end of the filament comprises a cavity in a column about which the filament is spooled.

19. (Original) The system recited in claim 18 wherein the means for extracting the filament from within the sheath and for spooling the extracted filament comprises means for rotating the column about an axis of the column.

20. (Original) The system recited in claim 19 wherein the means for confining the filament comprises first and second flanges disposed at positions along the axis, wherein the cavity is disposed between the first and second flanges and wherein at least one of the first and second flanges is removable from the column.